

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 27-37, 39-41 were allowed, and claims 1-26, 38 were rejected. Applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 27-37 and 39-41. By this Reply and Amendment, claims 1-26, 38 have been canceled without prejudice, and claims 27-37, 39-41 remain pending in the present application.

Claims 1, 3-10, 14-17 and 38 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by the French reference, US Patent Application No.: 6,595,296. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on several grounds, including those presented in the previous Reply. However, the rejection is believed moot because claims 1, 3-10, 14-17 and 38 have been canceled without prejudice.

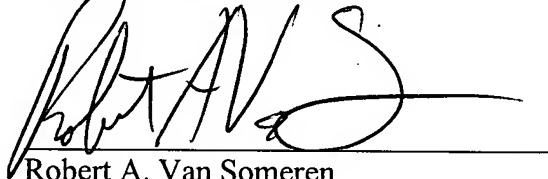
Claims 2 and 20-26 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the French reference. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on several grounds, including those presented in the previous Reply. However, the rejection is believed moot because claims 2 and 20-26 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claims 11-13 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the French reference in view of the Schultz et al. reference, US Patent No.: 6,536,530. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on several grounds, including those presented in the previous Reply. However, the rejection is believed moot because claims 11-13 have been canceled without prejudice.

Claims 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the French reference in view of the Schwendemann reference, US Patent No.: 6,450,263. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection on several grounds, including those presented in the previous Reply. However, the rejection is believed moot because claims 18 and 19 have been canceled without prejudice.

In view of the foregoing remarks, all pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner believes certain amendments are necessary to clarify the present claims or if the Examiner wishes to resolve other issues by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert A. Van Someren', written over a horizontal line.

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